

**To:** Delta Stewardship Council

March 10, 2011

**From:** David Mraz

**Subject:** March 10-11 Public Workshop on the Delta Plan – Panel C: Reduce Risks to People, Property, and State interests in the Delta

Council Members:

In response to your invitation to address the topic of reducing risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta, I have prepared the items below for your consideration. Please know that these are my views and not necessarily those of the Department, as these responses have not been vetted through others in responsible charge of the activities of the Department of Water Resources. Please see below a set of concepts for your consideration:

- To ensure availability of the land in the Delta for any purpose, including the orderly, balanced conservation and development, the land must be protected from flooding on a daily basis by a combination of structural and non structural water management features. Currently, the most important water control feature of the Delta is the levee system. The Delta Plan must support the features necessary to continue long-term maintenance of the system of levees that contribute to preservation of those local, regional, statewide and national benefits necessary to accomplish the legislative mandates of the Delta Stewardship Council. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Partnership between State and Local Agencies.
  - The Department of Water Resources' Delta Levees Program.
  - Central Valley Flood Protection Board.
  - Activities of the Department under FloodSAFE California.
- The levee system defines the Delta. It is the key to achieving the Council's co-equal goals and preserving the Delta as an evolving place. Without the levee system, the land now planted in crops, with highways, water conduits, utilities, and recreation areas on it would be flooded similar to Franks Tract or Liberty Island. While flooded and partially flooded islands do serve some specific interests, I believe the legislative mandates intend for the Delta to remain a vibrant agricultural economy. In order to preserve that agricultural economy the Delta Reclamation Districts need funding help over the long term for maintenance and necessary improvement of the levee system. They also need a capable, competitive, and knowledgeable force of contractors to help them preserve the levees. The Delta Plan can help achieve these goals by:
  - Supporting regular, predictable funding.
  - Work with the legislature to develop a funding source tied to the benefits obtained from the Delta.

- The Delta Plan will be a significant consideration in development of other plans and projects both in the Delta and in the Delta watershed. Findings of consistency could serve as a coordinating element or could be an obstruction of progress, depending somewhat on how they are administered. The Delta Plan should:
  - Be a concise, elegant document that sets a vision for the future and allows local interpretation.
  - Present long-term opportunities and goals for the Delta that can be implemented opportunistically.
- Flood safety in the Delta depends on many elements and events, mostly outside the Delta. Storage on the valley rim, operation of the dams, reductions of floodplain areas, not to mention climate change and sea level rise. With that in mind, The Delta Plan should:
  - Support legislation to fund improvements to the flood management system throughout the entire drainage basin, all the way to the Golden Gate.
  - Support the Delta local agencies in their efforts to achieve the Hazard Mitigation Plan levee geometry so they remain eligible for disaster funding.
  - Support the development of Polders in the Delta to reduce the total number of levee miles and make possible the implementation of seismic resistant levees.